

**SUMMARY REPORT OF
CITY OF COTTONWOOD AD-HOC SIGN CODE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING OF NOVEMBER 28, 2007
City Council Chambers – 826 N. Main Street – 6:30 p.m.**

(Note: this is an advisory committee without formal membership. Therefore, no “absences” are listed and no binding decisions are rendered.)

Attendees

Staff:

George Gehlert, Community Dev. Director Steve Engen, Code Enforcement Officer
Carol Hulse, Planning Technician

Public (Source: sign-in sheets)

Carl, David	Jauregui, Ruben	Smith, Darold
Carsrud, Ron	Mabery, Dan	Smith, Dena
Cerny, Joan	Mount, Joe	VanWert, Ellen
Etshman, Todd	Nulander, Nikki	Warren, Michael
Fisher, Terry	Oliphant, Bob	Wilder, Jean Ellen
Green, Larry	Seitz, Jeff	Woodburn, Mark

Agenda and Discussion Summary

Welcome and Introductions / Sign-In.

Director Gehlert welcomed attendees and asked them to sign in so they would be on the mailing list.

Process Overview.

Director Gehlert gave a brief overview of the process to date noting this is the third committee meeting and city staff members were added to the committee for input on ordinance enforcement.

Updates Regarding Committee Representation.

Director Gehlert reported that there are approximately 100 names on the mailing list for the meetings and there have been approximately 20 people at each meeting. He previously identified eight distinct commercial areas, all of which were represented at each meeting. Residents, sign makers, and others have also attended.

Review of Meeting Summary for 11-14-07.

Director Gehlert referenced the 11/14/07 meeting summary that was included in the mail-out and asked if anyone had any comments, additions, or corrections. There was none.

Discussion Regarding Process of Issue Development.

Director Gehlert said that tabulated comments from the meetings are available on the city's website and in the mail-outs. He asked if anyone had made comments that were not included. No one responded to the question.

Director Gehlert displayed the issues table and explained that it is the blueprint of what he will eventually pass to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The Commission will formulate a recommendation to the City Council who will provide staff with direction regarding revisions. His intent at the current meeting was to work through the alternatives contained in the table.

Director Gehlert reviewed general issues (other than code-related), which were identified at previous meetings and included in the "Identified Issues" handout. These were as follows.

- Values
- Variances
- Enforcement
- Education
- Code Mechanics
- Permit Application

These invoked the following comments.

- Give staff something they can reasonably enforce
- Two main issues – hazardous and offensive signs.

Director Gehlert's stated goal for this meeting was to get through nine items on the "General Provisions" portion of the issues table.

SIGN DEFINITION

Director Gehlert said part of this has to do with interpretation. He asked for comments, which were as follows.

- **Signs vs. Advertisement** - Have one definition for permanently affixed signs and another for other forms of graphic display/advertisement.
- **Searchlights, how to treat** - Gehlert said the lighting ordinance currently does not allow searchlights.
- **Lighted canopies/signs** - Gehlert said the ordinance currently prohibits any up lighting but that could be brought before the Planning and Zoning Commission and/or Council.
- **Odd or extraneous words** should be removed from the zoning ordinance.
- **Anything that draws attention to a business is a sign** - Gehlert explained that this is staff's interpretation.
- **Balloons, banners, etc.** - Some communities do not allow.
- **Affixed or not affixed** – define.

Other points of discussion and comments were - remodeling signs, etc. should be separated from A-frames; the code is very broad; the Committee should go through the current sign definition and identify what is wrong with it.

Director Gehlert read the sign definition from the code and asked if anyone wanted to change anything. Comments were - it is indirect and vague – make it clearer and direct; staff has no problem with the definition if it meets the committee's intent – do they want to change it? The only response was that it should be clearer.

Mr. Engen said a banner is a sign but we could deal with it later to determine if it needs a permit. Director Gehlert added that the code currently prohibits banners but they might be allowed for special events.

SIGN ALLOWANCE

Director Gehlert said the sign allowance currently is based on street frontage. This can be problematic in certain situations such as when a building is in a mall and does not face a street. Other issues are menu boards in drive-through restaurants, buildings on corners (two street frontages = double signage - can they combine into one large sign on the corner) and how to deal with a building in a plaza where it faces a parking lot. Comments and suggestions were:

- **Streamline the variance for combining allowance** - but leave the code as it is. Staff explained that state statute requires proof of a hardship for a variance.
- **Make it an administrative process with guidelines.**
- **Let Design Review Board decide.**

SIGN AREA

- **“Sign face”** – differentiate between total monument vs. entire sign face or lettering only. Comments were - Design Review Board could define what constitutes the “face.” You (staff) have been doing (interpreting) it right – define it in the code that way.

SIGN SIZE

- **Relate sign height to building height.**

SEPARATE DISTRICT PROVISIONS

There was discussion both ways about whether Old Town should be treated differently or not. Some arguments for special rules for Old Town were that it is a historic district, tourist oriented, physical constraints such as no property frontage, on-site parking limited or nonexistent, etc. As a further example, the lighting code is based on acreage. Using those criteria in Old Town (where the buildings abut one another with little or no surrounding land), a business could be restricted to one exterior light, which would not even provide security. Others felt there was no reason to treat Old Town differently and treating any area differently would increase enforcement difficulty.

Other points of discussion were:

- Does the current code work on SR260, which is four lanes and higher speed traffic?
- There should be rules for only three different designations – commercial/industrial, residential, and Old Town.
- Define Old Town.
- Do new signs installed by the Old Town Gallery (next to the Outsider) meet height limitations?

ANIMATED OR MOVING

Director Gehlert posed the question, “Should we broaden the code to include moving signs?” There was little discussion on this topic and it did not appear that a consensus was reached.

LIGHTING

- **Neon** (Should it be allowed in Old Town?)
- **Non-conforming**

Director Gehlert mentioned that some people question Christmas-type lights displayed in the summer. The code does not allow them, but should it? Security lighting and searchlights were also discussed. The consensus seemed to be that these are covered by the lighting ordinance and there is no need to address them in the sign ordinance.

MAINTENANCE

- Grandfathered signs should come into conformance when any changes are made – or not (opinion went both ways).

OFF PREMISE SIGNS

This discussion centered largely on needs of “back street” businesses. Director Gehlert said this would be dealt with later. An ordinance that would allow off premise signs must be crafted carefully. Someone suggested that a sign placed at a corner could identify businesses down the street and eliminate A-frames. Director Gehlert reiterated that this and directional signage would be a topic for the next meeting.

Recap of Issues / Recent letters and comments.

There was none.

Set Next Meeting Date, Time, Place

The next meeting would be held December 12 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council chambers.

Future Agenda Items / Assignments.

Director Gehlert outlined the following.

- Walk through the new list at the next meeting.
- Receive direction from the Planning and Zoning Commission in January.
- Take the proposals to Council in conceptual form before completing the actual text revisions.

One committee member expressed frustration with the time spent talking about code revisions. Another member said she served on a similar committee in Flagstaff and it took them two years to sort out the issues, educate the public, and actually make changes.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.